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ABSTRACT

The Integrated Day Teacher Education Program is an attempt to create a model for teacher preparation which will make schools healthy places for teachers and children. It is sensitive to the criticisms leveled at teacher education by observers such as Silberman and attempts to lead teachers to share in decision making, participate actively in learning, and become independent learners in their own right. During the workshop semester, up to 50 undergraduates join 15 or so graduate students in a series of learning experiences which have replaced the conventional methods and curriculum courses. These preservice teachers earn 18 hours of credit for participating in activity-oriented workshops in Multi-Arts, Math and Science, Language Arts and Reading, Curriculum Building, Social Studies, and Human Relations. Workshops are offered during two-and-a-half-hour blocks of time weekly. While learning activities vary widely (from lectures, to slide shows, to task groups, to finance committee meetings), all are competency based. The preservice teachers demonstrate their beginning competence during learning fairs, through projects, in peer teaching situations, and during their weekly field day experiences. Learning experiences are often integrated, and competencies overlap subject areas so that the preservice teacher can work toward several competencies concurrently. (JA)

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Teacher Education for the Integrated Day

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*(Recipient of the University of Massachusetts Distinguished Teacher Award, 1974)

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"Multi-arts and human relations as the integrating themes in a competency based teacher education program...in open education?" the guest asked, incredulously. She wondered, as have others, how a teacher education program could deal with so many variables and be anything more than confusing to those involved. Her questions, and other's, have been somewhat resolved as visitors explore the Workshop Rooms of the Integrated Day Teacher Education Program at the School of Education, University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

At any time during the week, the visitor is likely to see such activity as:

*the finance committee meeting to pour over math catalogues trying to find the best buy in cuisenaire rods

*a Kids' Day planning group busy making final plans for the "Family" theme they will introduce in their curriculum fair

*a small group of preservice teachers and children making masks for a play they are writing

*a lecture on the developmental stages of cognition

*several learners sharing slides of the environmental studies work they have been doing with younger learners at a nearby urban school

*a task group preparing record keeping schemes for a display which will help them demonstrate their beginning competence

*an inservice teacher describing her school to a group of preservice teachers who will soon select their internship site

These activities, and more, are part of the learning experiences preservice elementary teachers in the Integrated Day Program will explore during the semester prior to their internship. The workshops are first steps along a preservice/inservice continuum model for teacher education in its fourth year of operation at the School. It is one of 20 or so programs at the School of Education recently acknowledged as distinguished by the American Association of Colleagues for Teacher Education.

The program has evolved in an attempt to create a model for teacher preparation which will make schools healthy places for teachers and children. It is sensitive to the criticisms leveled at teacher education by such observers as Silberman (1970). The program is one attempt to obliterate the mindlessness and dullness of conventional teacher preparation with processes which lead teachers to share in decision-making, participate actively in learning, and become independent learners in their own right.

During the workshop semester, up to fifty selected undergraduates join fifteen or so graduate students in a series of learning experiences which have replaced the conventional methods and curriculum courses. These preservice teachers earn 18 hours of credit for participating in activity-oriented workshops in Multi-Arts, Math and Science, Language Arts and Reading, Curriculum Building, Social Studies, and Human Relations. Workshops are offered during 2 1/2 hour blocks of time weekly.

Most workshop activities lead to opportunities for demonstration of competence during the Wednesday field day experience. Competencies are desinged to lead preservice teachers toward those behaviors and attitudes effective open classroom teachers exhibit and hold.

While learning activities vary widely, all are competency based. The staff has been able to avoid the limitations of narrowly stated behavioral objectives by focusing on patterns of behavior as indicators of competence. The staff has combined the concept of competency based teacher education with the process of open education. Indeed, preservice teachers who demonstrate the competencies necessary for beginning the internship, later work in classrooms with inservice teachers from the program who are at various stages of opening their own classrooms. Competencies for both the preservice and inservice phases of the program are designed to prepare

teachers for the open classroom.

A major discriminating factor between an open classroom and any other is the level of contribution teachers and children make to goal setting, activity planning, use of space, and evaluation. In open classrooms that level of contribution is high. This approach depends upon shared decision-making, active learning, and skill acquisition within a humane environment and leads children to a high degree of independence as learners. An integral part of this approach is the intent to maintain the natural integration of learning; that is, teachers in open classrooms recognize and act on the belief that learning takes place in wholes. Teachers who will foster this kind of open learning must have personal learning experiences which lead them toward that same kind of independence as learners. The Integrated Day Program is designed to provide those kinds of learning experiences.

Throughout the workshop semester, preservice teachers are helped to acquire knowledge and develop skills in observing and diagnosing learners' strengths, planning and extending learning experiences, evaluating, and managing the time, space, and resources for learning. They demonstrate their beginning competence during learning fairs, through projects, in peer teaching situations, and during their weekly field day experiences.

Learning experiences are often integrated and competencies overlap subject areas so that the preservice teacher can work toward several competencies concurrently. As an example, one expectation for Curriculum Building is that teachers will demonstrate competencies through some forty or so activities. Learners work toward those ends using what they have learned in the various subject matter workshops. In this way they

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also meet the expectations for those subject matter areas. The preservice teacher who initiates a theme on "Feelings", for example, has opportunity to meet curriculum competencies in observing, diagnosing, planning, and instructing. The teacher may also choose to work on competencies required in Multi-Arts, Human Relations, and Social Studies. The theme might also include Math and Science activities allowing the preservice teacher to demonstrate competencies in those areas. When the teacher must explain and clarify his goals and plans with peers and other teachers, then he has an opportunity to work toward competence in dealing with the assumptions underlying open education.

Because preservice teachers have not learned in these ways, they are often frustrated by the openness of choice, the limited time available, and the anxiety of realizing how much there is to know. The staff is finding that these preservice teachers, like their younger counterparts, need to "unlearn" the attitudes and assumptions which their conventional education has provided them. We are finding ways of helping these learners to organize and structure their own learning. Admittedly this is a difficult process. The dissonance created is great; however, the strategies for resolution of that dissonance are becoming clearer to us. Some of these approaches include frequent all group meetings in which feelings, needs, and frustrations are aired; weekly advisory group meetings of five or so students and a staff member; periodic evening get togethers and social gatherings; and monthly Integrated Day Program luncheons and meetings.

In addition to regularly scheduled workshops, preservice teachers participate with staff in community building experiences, field trips, seminars, support groups, and committee work. Preservice teachers join inservice teachers in the field to build curriculum and integrated

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learning experiences for and with children. During open lab times both preservice teachers and staff offer and request workshop activities. The attempt is to build on each individual's strengths while responding to the unique needs uncovered during the field experiences.

Preservice teachers keep folders of their work, maintain logs in which they reflect on their experiences, and confer with staff on their professional growth toward competence. Preparation for the field day work with inservice teachers and children provides very real "teacher work" for preparing teachers. Other professional activities include the opportunity to contribute to the Integrated Day Program newsletter, In Touch, as well as opportunities to offer workshops to other teachers, parents, and children.

Most preservice teachers complete the workshop competencies in a semester and move into the inservice phase of the program for a full semester of internship in an open classroom. Here they work toward competencies necessary for beginning teaching with teachers and resource people trained by the program staff.

To facilitate the selection of internship site and to help in the resolution of anxiety about that site, the inservice teachers and their current interns visit with the preservice teachers in the workshop rooms. These informal sharings may focus on problems of housing, the uniqueness of the site community, appropriate behaviors, survival skills, opportunities for recreation, and negotiation of the competencies to be developed during the internship.

While many students find the transition from a conventional to a more open education approach an anxiety-producing experience, they do feel competent to begin opening their own classrooms at the conclusion of the internship period. Requests for these preservice teachers as interns in

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classrooms far outnumber those currently in training. Recent graduates are finding teaching positions in private and public schools, teacher college lab schools, advisories, and federally funded programs.

If the preservice teachers who complete the Integrated Day Program do, indeed, reach the intended outcomes of the program then we have some hope that they will influence children's lives in positive ways as well. When this is the case children will become successful decision-makers, active learners, and effective self-managers. What a vision of the future that suggests!